August 5, 2011

Port Program Planning Committee

In attendance: Erin, Susan, Jonathan, Elysa, Sarah, Jenny, Kati, Lisa, Tom, Mary K

Susan started by announcing good news: MS received notice that NEH is awarding us a $40,000 planning grant for “In the Wake of the Whalers” (a copy of the grant can be found on the Wiki) This grant focuses on the intellectual underpinnings of the story and allows us to consult with leading scholars on four main themes. 1. The Cultural Crossroads of Globalizations (Cultural Cross-pollination) 2. Profit from the Deep (Economic Endeavors) 3. The American Sailor: Making of an Icon (American Identity); and 4. Thar She Blows: From Whale Hunt to Whale Watch (Changing perceptions of the natural world)

David Marz at NEH imparted some feedback from the evaluators on a phone call with Susan: While MS applied for a $75,000 grant, David wanted to stress that the level of $40K reflected the pressure on their funds and does not indicate that they do not see this as a project of national importance. He said that MS did a great job of making the case for national impact, and that readers gave us the highest possible ratings. “The discussion on this proposal was a love fest.” More information will be forthcoming after a budget revision is completed.

Next Susan handed out the article, “If Managers Thought like Designers” by Jeanne M. Liedtka (Available on the Wiki) The article includes 10 tips to follow when designing programs like those for the 38th voyage. “In order to do so, we must first aspire to achieve them, challenging the mediocrity of much of today’s designs. We must also learn new skills—the mastery of core technologies and the ability to persuade, to talk differently, to experiment. Finally we must embrace new processes—processes that invite a more diverse set of perspectives into the strategic conversation that work backwards from a clear sense of the outcomes that we want to create. And we must start out conversation with possibilities.”

Susan mentioned that we need to focus on both individual programs and the cohesive experience. This may feel like an iterative and inter-related planning process. The process may require us to revisit things and spend a great deal of time on others—but generally the feeling is that we are moving forward in a very positive worthwhile direction.

Susan next discussed the work done to date. The timeline created using sticky notes was put into an excel spread sheet that was passed out (and is available on the wiki) In this format it will be easier to understand the dependency from one project to another. **For the next meeting review the specific program you were responsible for to see if any changes need to be made to the timeline.**

A list was then passed out with three categories—Menu of Items for Port Partners, High Priority Ideas for Mystic Seaport, and Undecided Ideas. (An updated list can be found on the wiki) Geocache was moved to the Menu of Items for Port Partners as local geocache groups and the local municipalities would be best suited to identify places and things to showcase. MS would help manage it but ports would be responsible for the organization and completion. The timeline created for the geocache activity will be given to the port partners as it is an excellent guideline for them.

Sarah suggested and others agreed that the online game may be too costly. It can only be pursued if grant money comes through for additional projects relating to the OLC. As a result, the online game was moved into a newly created category or column called, “wish list”

It was suggested that MS help manage and create the QR codes for port partner programs. Kati mentioned that QR codes and Apps are being made easier to create. Over the next couple of years the cost for technology will go down as the design becomes easier to grasp. The online game that was moved to the wish list may become more attainable, easier to create, and less expensive as a result. This was very positive information as many of the projects have technology components.

Undecided ideas were then dealt with. Tale of a Whaler was crossed off the list entirely so that the new piece feels fresh and unique to the experience of the 38th voyage. “We can’t let the great success of Tale of a Whaler stifle our creativity for the next great piece.” Lisa mentioned that the new piece may/should connect with online components or the stowaway.

Elysa explained that she really liked the stowaway idea. She was impressed to come back to the group after being away to see the new idea emerge.

The flotilla will be passed off to either Advancement or Dana H and Shannon. Attention needs to be paid to the welcoming and leaving of the CWM but it is not the responsibility of this group.

The lights out and lanterns idea was also moved to the Menu of Ideas for Port Partners. The local municipalities will be able to better determine if this idea is feasible in a given port.

The Young Adult Book Series was moved to High Priority Ideas for MS. Mary K shared that UCONN has the leading children’s literature program. Several authors and books were mentioned including: The National Park Service Series, Phyllis Whitney: The Mystery of the Angry Idol, The Hardy Boys: Book #47 The Mystery of the Whale Tattoo, and Susan Blackaby. Several of these books used Mystic Seaport as their setting or were written by local authors. It is clear that we have resources close by.

The ballast idea was moved to High Priority ideas but the name was changed to: Symbolic Things to Carry. This could mean asking ports what special items they would like to have carried, saving flags that were raised, or having visitors contribute something of their own. This ballast would be separate from the actual ballast used by people in the shipyard. There was a suggestion that pavers/brickers could be purchased as a fundraiser. Advancement and the shipyard need to be consulted about this idea to make sure there is enough space, etc.

Mary K mentioned that she was in New Bedford this past weekend when the Eagle came into port. There was a flotilla, crowds of people, and the majority of the hotels were booked. **Tom will talk with New Bedford or the people on The Eagle to get the numbers of people that attended.** This high turnout is a great sign for the 38th voyage.

Several people suggested a daily life and food component be added to the exhibitry whether on board or at the dock. This may mean every visitor is given a piece of hardtack or that every visitor has the chance to observe what happens to food after several months at sea.

Elysa mentioned that a compelling part of the collection at the Constitution Museum was an engraved piece of 1812 commemorative hardtack. Perhaps we should have CWM 38th voyage or CWM 2014 engraved hardtack.

Jonathan next explained that the ropewalk will be used for working on the CWM rigging. Matt proposed this idea and also suggested that it may be possible to have the ropewalk function again. While it may be ambitious to use the ropewalk to make rope for the CWM it is possible to find volunteers to work at making the machines operational. The collections department has ok’d this idea saying that it is good for the ropewalk to stay oiled and cared for.

Susan mentioned that Steve White is interested in laying out the sails of the CWM on the green. They would be arranged as if they were on the ship. Photographs will be taken and used in fundraising materials. Mary K has done an inventory of the sails—four need to be replaced, four could be replaced, and several are basically brand new. Jenny suggested lining visitors up around the perimeter of the sails to show their scale. Pictures could be taken on top of the galley. Jonathan and Mary K agreed that it could be turned into a sort of performance piece. Elysa suggested we lay them out twice- the first time can be practice to prepare. Susan suggested we lay them out as part of the Williams Mystic alumni weekend on Saturday September 17 and then again as a spectacle during free admission Saturday on November 5 during the retail and restaurant deals of the local CWM fundraising weeklong event.

As the meeting came to an end Susan shared several questions to think about for the next meeting:

**What is happening on the grounds while the CWM is away?**

**What will the narrative of the day look like? Will it be too dense with activities that visitors will never get to all of them? Or, will there be a great array of choices?**

**How will MS stay connected/ what happens after visitor’s experience at the port?**

**What is going to happen on board during transit? What will be interesting to find out during the voyage?**

Several people commented that there are a number of great activities and research that can be done while on board. We need to make sure we think about these things ahead of time so we do not miss out. We don’t want to have said “wouldn’t it be cool if we did \_\_\_\_\_\_ while at sea.”

Mary K mentioned that Kroum Batchvarov has just been hired as an assistant professor to the department of anthropology at UCONN Avery Point. Kroum specializes in English & Dutch ship construction. While employed by the Swedish National Maritime Museums, Division Vasa, he developed and implemented a method for recording the frames of the Swedish warship, Vasa, which sank on its maiden voyage in 1628. He will be a great resource for developing transit activities similar to the Vasa style research.

Susan also mentioned that the Kalmar Nyckel may be another great resource when thinking about transit research and activities.

The next meeting will be on August 26th from 10AM- 11:30AM

**“Homework” for next meeting:**

**For those who have created a timeline for an activity please fill out the Event Checklist Jenny handed out and the updated Visitor Experience/Port Experience Matrix that is attached to this email.**